THE REAL "TOMMY ATKINS" IN PEACE AND WAR

E. Charles Vivian Tells Just What Sort of a Fellow Is the British Private---Kipling's Soldier and That of To-day

THE real life of the English soldier, is told by E Charles Vivian in his book "The British Army From Within," to be published by the George H Doran Company. Just what sort of a fellow "Tommy Atkins" is and what he has to do is clearly set forth.

On the badges of the Corps of Engineers and also on those of the Royal Artillery, says the author, will be found the word "Ubique," but it is a word that might just as well be used with regard to the whole of the British army, which serves everywhere, does everything, undergoes every kind of climate and gains contact with every class of people. In this respect the British soldier enjoys a distinct advantage over the soldiers of continental armies; he has a chance of seeing the world. India, Africa, Egypt, the West Indies, Mauritius and the Mediterranean stations are open to him, and by the time he leaves the service he has at least had the opportunity of becoming cosmopolitan in his tastes and ways, of becoming a man of larger ideas and better grasp on the problems of life than were his at the time when she took the oath and passed the doctor.

To come down to concrete facts as regards the actual composition and general duties of the army. The main station in England is Aldershot, headquarters of the first army corps. Theoretically, in all cases of national emergency the Aldershot command is first to move, and the units composing it are expected to be able to mobilize for active service at twenty-four hours notice. Next in importance are Colchester, Shorncliffe, York and Bulford—the centre of the Salisbury Plain area under military control. In Ireland the principal stations are Dublin and the Curragh. In these stations under normal circumstances the furlough season begins at Christmas time and lasts up to the following March; for this period men are granted leave in batches and drill and training for those who remain in barracks while the others take their holidays is somewhat relaxed.

In addition to general training, which lasts through the year and goes on from year to year, there are various "courses" to be undergone in order to keep the departmental staff of each unit up to strength. Thus, in the infantry, signallers must be specially trained, and pioneers, who do all the sanitary work of their units, must be taught their duties, while musketry instructors and drill instructors have to be selected and taught their duties. Each unit, except as regards medical service and a few things totally out of its range of activity, is self-contained and self-supporting, and thus it is necessary that it should train its own instructors and its own special men for special work, together with understudies to take their places in case of casualties. The cavalry trains its own signallers, scouts, shoeing smiths, cooks, pioneers and to a certain extent medical orderlies. The artillery does likewise, and in addition keeps up a staff of artificers to attend to minor needs of the guns—men capable of repairing breakages in the field, as far as this is possible. Wherever horses are concerned, too, saddlers must be trained to keep leather work in repair.

The actual composition of the various units composing the British army differs from that of continental armies, the only units of strength which are identical being those of the army corps, and the division, which is half an army corps. The next unit in the scale is the brigade, which is composed of three batteries of field or two of horse artillery, three regiments of cavalry, or four battalions of infantry. A division is made up of brigades, which vary in number and composition according to the work which that particular division will be expected to accomplish—there is a standard for the composition of the division, but changes now in process of taking place in the composition of the whole army render it unsafe to quote any standard as definite.

There is a permanent and outstanding difference between the British army as a whole and any continental army as a whole. In the case of the continental army, no matter which one is chosen for purposes of comparison, the conscript system renders it a part of the nation concerned, identifies the army with the nation and incidentally takes out the element of freedom. A man in a conscript army is serving because he must, and, no matter how patriotic he may be, there are times when this is brought home to him very forcibly by the discipline without which no army could exist. In the British army, on the other hand, the men serving are there by their own choice, this fact gives them a sense that the discipline, no matter how distasteful it may be, is a necessity to their training for the enlistment they chose to undergo. In the British army, until the present war linked it on to the war in the street, was not a part of the nation, but a thing distinct from the nation; it was a profession apart, and none too envied. As a profession, in the opinion of many, but something to be avoided by men in equivalent walks of civilian life.

We may take the case of a recruit who had enlisted from mixed motives, arrived at a station whence he had to make his way to barracks in the evening in order to begin his new life; here are his impressions of beginning life in the army.

He went up a hill and along a muddy lane and, arriving at the barracks, inquired, as he had been told to do, for the quartermaster-sergeant of "C" Squadron. He was directed to the quartermaster-sergeant's office and on arrival there was asked his name and the nature of his business by a young corporal who took life as a joke and regarded recruits as a special form of food for amusement. Having ascertained the name of the recruit, the corporal, who was a kindly fellow at heart, took him down to the regimental coffee bar and provided him with a meal of cold meat, bread and coffee—at the squadron's expense of course, for the provision of the meal was a matter of duty. The corporal then indicated the room in which the recruit was to sleep and left him.

The recruit opened the door of the room and looked in. It was a long room, with a row of narrow beds down each side, and in the middle two tables on iron trestles, whereon were several basins. On almost every bed sat a man, busily engaged in cleaning some article of clothing or equipment; some were cleaning buttons, some were pipeclaying belts, some were engaged with sword hilts and brick dust, some were cleaning boots—all were cleaning up as if their lives depended on it, for "lights out" would be sounded at a quarter past 10 o'clock, and it was already past 9 o'clock. When they saw the recruit they gave him greeting. "Here's another one!" they cried. "Here's another victim!" and other phrases which led this particular recruit to think, quite erroneously, that he had come to something very bad indeed. Two or three were singing, with more noise than melody, a song which was very old when Queen Anne died—it was one of the ditties of the regiment, sung by its men on all possible and most impossible occasions. They joked and chaffed each other, they sang scraps of songs, allegedly pathetic and allegedly humorous; they shouted from one end of the room to the other in order to carry on conversations; they called the army names, they called each other names and they called individuals who were evidently absent yet more names, none of them complimentary. They made a lot of noise, and in that noise one of them, having finished his cleaning, slept; when he snored one of his comrades threw a boot at him, and, since the boot hit him, he woke up and looked round, but in vain. Therefore he calmly went to sleep again, but this time he did not snore. The recruit, who had come out of an ordinary civilian home, and hitherto had had only the vaguest of notions as to what the army was really like, wondered if he were dreaming, and then realized that he himself was one of these men, since he had voluntarily given up certain years of his life to their business. With that reflection he undressed and got into bed. After "lights out" had sounded and been promptly obeyed he went to sleep. * * * *

Gradually as the recruit learns the need for taking care of such property as he wishes to retain he also learns barrack room slang and phrasing. In the army one is never late: one is "pushed." One does not eat, but one "scoffs." A man who dodges work is said to "swing the lead," and there is no such thing as work, for it is "graft" or "kom." Practically every man, too, has his nickname: all Clarkes are "Nobby," all Palmers are "Pedlar," all Welshmen in other than Welsh regiments are "Taffy," all Robinsons are "Jack," and every surname in like fashion has its regular nickname. But, contrary to the belief entertained by the average civilian, the soldier does not readily take to nicknames for his superiors. For his own officers he sometimes finds equivalents to their names through their personal peculiarities, but if one spoke to a soldier of "K. of K." the soldier would require an explanation, while "Bobs" for Lord Roberts might be understood but would not be appreciated. The general officer and the superior worthy of respect gets his full title from the soldier at all times and nicknames, except for comrades of the same company or squadron, form a mark of contempt, especially when applied to commissioned officers.

In the army the man who dislikes his work has to pocket the dislike and go on with the work, while if his employers, the regimental authorities, have any fault to find with him they do not express it by dismissal until various forms and quantities of punishment for slackness have been resorted to. The recruit gets far more punishments than the older soldier, for the latter has learned what to do and what to avoid in order to make life simple for himself; his punishments usually arise out of looking on the beer when it is brown to an extent incompatible with the fulfilment of his duties, and, when sober, he generally manages to evade "office" and its results. But the recruit finds that the corporal in charge of his room, the drill instructor in charge of him at drill, the sergeant in charge of his section or troop, the non-commissioned officer under whose supervision he does his fatigues, and a host of other superiors, are all capable of either placing him in the guardroom to await trial or of informing him that he is under open arrest, and equally liable for trial—and this for offences which would not count as such in civilian life, for three-quarters of the military "crimes" are not crimes at all in the civil code.

The average man, however, performs work of average quality, avoids drunkenness and keeps to time, the result being that he does not undergo punishment. Barrack room life for the recruit is a fairly simple matter. He makes his own bed and sweeps the floor round it. He folds his blankets and sheets to the prescribed pattern; the way in which he folds his kit and clothing also is regulated for him by the company or squadron authorities, and for the rest he is kept too busy throughout the day at drill and too busy throughout the evening in preparing for the next day's drill, to get into mischief to any appreciable extent. The recruit who involves himself in "crime" is, more often than not, looking for trouble.

With regard to the composition of the new army it may be said that the standing of the men has altered materially since the outbreak of hostilities, though this is in keeping with the trend of thought and feeling that has been evident since the end of the South African campaign. Up to the end of the nineteenth century there still remained obscure provincial centres in which it was supposed that only wastrels would enlist, with a view of getting an easy means of livelihood; further back, this conception of the army was a very common one. It is hard to say at what period of British history such an idea gained currency, unless the employment of mercenaries previous to the time of the French revolution may have given it birth. For, long before Waterloo, the British soldier gave ample proof of the stuff of which he is made, and there is not a battlefield of history from which there has not come some instance of self-denial or devotion to a comrade which attests among the ranks of the British army the existence of the highest principles by which humanity is actuated.

As character studies, Kipling's soldiers are masterly works, but they bear little relation to the soldier of to-day, who, even as an infantryman, is required to be an educated man in certain directions, since he lives in a welter of wind gauges and trajectory, decimal points and mathematical calculations with regard to the accomplishment of his duties. The public as a whole has been waking up to these facts slowly—very slowly—but it has taken the world catastrophe of a general European war to shake the public entirely from its apathy, and cause it to realize that the army is an agglomeration of men in the highest sense of that little three lettered word. There is to-day among all ranks and classes a realization of the good that is and always has been in the army; there is a new interest in soldiers, in military movements, and in all that pertains to the theory and practice of war, and this augurs well for the future of members of the new army, both on duty and among their friends.

One thing that men and officers alike in the new army should be made to realize is that the possession of a good kit carries one half of the way on active service: the things that carry the other half of the way are not to be purchased.

Men of Army Have Wonderful Opportunities of Seeing Different Countries of the World While in Service

But the man who has undergone the rigors of active service understands the value of good boots, good field glasses, well fitting and suitable clothing and really portable accessories to personal comfort. These things and an intelligent choice of them go far to make up the difference between the man successful at his work and the failure, for although a bad workman is said to quarrel with his tools a good workman cannot do good work with bad tools. In the peculiarly exacting conditions entailed on men by active service kit and equipment should be of the best quality obtainable and the choice of what to take and what to leave behind is evidence to some extent of the fitness of the man for his work. The most important item of all is boots, and in fitting boots for active service one should be careful to select a size that will admit of the wearer enjoying a night's sleep without removing his footwear. Care of the feet and retention of the ability to march are quite as important as shooting abilities, for the man who cannot march with the rest will not be in it when the shooting begins. For the rest it is wise to try, if not to follow, as often as possible the tips given by men who have been on active service with regard to the choice of kit and the little things that make for comfort; that is as far as compliance with these tips is compatible with keeping the size of one's outfit down.

Use Found for Closed Paris Shops

View of the Avenue de l'Opera in war times.

THE most flourishing industry of Paris at the present time, indeed it might be said the only flourishing industry outside of concerns doing work for the War Department, is the sale of picture postcards. The few shops that remain open all offer picture postcards for sale, whatever may be their regular wares. The newspaper kiosks make up for the absence of weekly papers by dealing in postcards. But the chief trade in them is carried on by dealers who take advantage of the shuttered fronts of closed shops, which are admirably fitted for the display of the goods at a convenient height for the possible purchaser's inspection.

The accompanying view of the Avenue de l'Opera, photographed for THE SUN, testifies to the number of closed shops and to their convenience as postcard depots. The owners of some shops have tried to impose a rental of a dollar a day on those using their frontage, but there are so many who have made no such charge that no one has had to pay rent as yet.

THE VIRTUE OF BABYLON.

How "Wicked" Paris Shows Up In the War.

WAR shows what is in a people. Critics of the French have called Paris "the modern Babylon." They would be surprised if they could see Paris now.

It is a French provincial town, vastly larger than the others, more silent, more tranquil. In the streets peaceful pedestrains, of earnest faces, go about their affairs. There is no insolent luxury. You will not see a single one of those brilliant equipages which in certain other continental capitals of late have advertised the money burning of financiers, speculators and army furnishers. Everybody, rich or poor, takes the subway or tram car.

One would seek in vain for flashing show windows to tempt one with diamonds, pearls, laces, embroideries and vain gewgaws. Even the shops have adopted the simple life, offering goods of solid value, clothes, boots, blankets, foodstuffs, ah yes, food, food, food, in what profusion!

The Paris population has become so sober that they close the cafes every night at 8 o'clock and the restaurants at 9:30. The most famous restaurants are simplicity itself, and the plain things which they serve are just like those offered in the cheaper restaurants, only slightly dearer. At the cafe have a care not to demand an absinthe; you would scandalize them, and the waiter would reply, reproachful, hurt: "We do not have that merchandise." The extreme limit of debauch is a burnt wine or quinine tonic.

If former critics could see Babylon they would find neither gambling club nor betting agency, nor hear the invitation "Want a guide, sir? Paris by night, sir?" round the great hotels. The racetracks are grazing grounds for the cattle of a thousand hills. The theatres and music halls are shut. Actresses and ballet girls are Red Cross nurses. But the moving pictures thrill hearts with scenes of heroism, charity, piety.

The apache has disappeared. He is fighting at the front. This is the simple truth—and he makes a magnificent soldier. For example, the "Bat. d'Af." (Disciplinary Battalion of Africa, made up entirely of violent fellows who have had court condemnations and do compulsory service under almost penal discipline at ordinary times) so distinguished itself on the Aisne that it was four times cited in orders of the day.

With the apache street violence has disappeared from Paris. The streets have become so safe that it was considered no imprudence to turn out the gas. The rare nightfarers, being no longer drunk, run no risks of mistaking their street and number.

And as there are no more crimes the public has lost the notion of them. The newspapers, purged of "faits divers," Parisian dramas and detective feuilletons, are charmed to put intelligent subjects under their readers' noses.

And lastly, Babylon used to be infested by practical politicians of fourteen distinct parties. Their rivalries had almost ruined France. They have all repented and are ashamed. So we see only honest faces.

Thus in a few weeks the "wickedest" city of the world—sincerely believed to be such by many honest people—has become the most virtuous on the surface of the globe. Paris has even put off her habitual nervousness and the "mercurial" disposition universally attributed to her. Like worn garments, she has put aside all childish things.

She has become docile, patient, reasonable. She supports without a murmur all the inconveniences imposed upon her. She consents to read in her newspapers only what the Government deems good for publication—resigns herself to know not much, she who was wont to know it all. She saddens at insuccesses without discouragement, and rejoices over victories without clamor.

And to bring about this prodigy there was needed one thing only—just the promise that if she would be very good she should be delivered from a nightmare.

THE WAR SONGS OF THE BELLIGERENT NATIONS

THREE war songs, in the languages of three belligerent nations, French, German and English, have flashed like Hertzian waves all over Europe. Everywhere one hears them and one comes across them in the newspapers adorned with decorative designs.

The song of the Germans, "The Zeppelin," shows clearly the direction of their strongest resentment, which is not against the Slav peril nor the hereditary French foe, but against their English cousins.

As an expression of this sentiment to increase the contempt, it is in a mixture of German and English. It is as follows:

THE ZEPPELIN.

England has a little war,
Aber fern von der Gefahr.
Sitzen Tom und Fred und Bess,
Jolly snug and pitiless,
Essen toast und trinken tea.
Oh! the little war on sea!

Mutton chop and steak and peas,
Strawberry jam and Stilton cheese,
Schmecken Tom und Bess und Fred,
How many Germans are there dead?
Deutschland geht zugrunde? Wie?
Oh! the little war on sea!

Tom says: It is costing money.
Aber dann—oh, give me honey!
When there's no more is der Welt,
Nichts, was uns die Stange hält,
Nichts mehr made in Germany.
Oh! the little war on sea!

Pitsch und Patsch und Plomperompion!
Wo sind Bess und Fred und Tom?
Busted kurt and busted klein
(Bomb bust from the Zeppelein)
Here a head and there a knee,
Autsch! the little war on sea!

The English song is for marching; and it goes to the tune of "D'ye ken John Peel?"

"D'YE KEN JOHN FRENCH?"

D'ye ken John French, with his khaki suit,
His belt and gaiters, and his stout brown boot,
Along with his guns, and his horse, and his foot,
On the road to Berlin in the morning?

CHORUS.

Yes, we ken John French, and old Joffre too,
And all his men to the tricolor true,
And Belgians and Russians, a jolly good few,
On the road to Berlin in the morning!

The Prussian Kaiser must be made to kneel,
The Prussian Eagle must be made to feel,
The force of the bullet and the good cold steel,
On the road to Berlin in the morning.

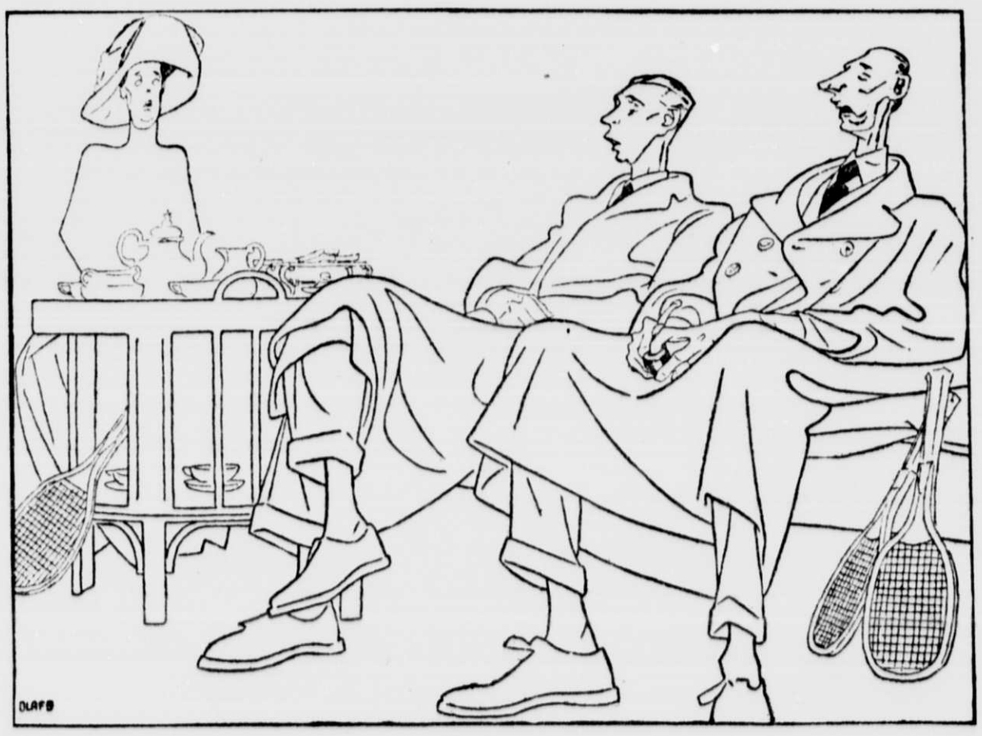
CHORUS.

Yes, we ken John French, &c.

For the mothers they slew, and the kids as well,
And for sundry things it's not fit to tell,
We've got to catch 'em and give 'em hell,
On the road to Berlin in the morning!

CHORUS.

Yes, we ken John French, &c.



THE SONG.

Mutton chop and steak and peas,
Strawberry jam and Stilton cheese,
Schmecken Tom und Bess und Fred,
How many Germans are there dead?

The French song is by a hitherto unknown man named Silvain Pitt, and reminds one of Victor Hugo. It is called "Carillon of Victory," and was inspired by the chimes of bombarded cathedrals and wrecked churches. At the same time, it is a veritable ringing and chiming of the beautiful French names of cities and provinces on the firing line. It begins:

All the names of France are fine,
Names of cities, names of slopes,
Names of forests, trees and folks.

Then it continues:

Drink to the health of France, mes amis!
And Bordeaux and Bourgogne and Champagne and Clery!

Friends of l'Angleterre, amis de la Russie,
Amis de Cracovie, amis de Varsovie,
That every spot of land won back from the enemy,
Washed by our blood, become the more cheri!
Montmirail! Luzancy!
Meaux! Nanteuil! Chateau-Thierry!
Pologne!
Pologne!

As we, glass against glass,
Heart against heart,
Ring, bells, cannons thunder in the air
Without reproach and without fear.
Ring for our parents, ring for nos amis!
Ring for the new born, and ring for those who marry!
Ring seconde and quart, tierce of Picardy!
Ring for those who die at the front for the Patrie!
For Liege and for Louvain, and for Bruxelles aussi!

For Compiegne and Maubeuge, for Rheims and for Nancy!
Saint-Quentin! Saint-Denis!
Senlis! Soissons! and Corbie!
Peronne!
Peronne!

France is in danger!
And if bronze should lack her,
Bells and carillons,
Quit your church towers,
Become cannons!

When the Patrie shall be resuscitated, and it is time to ring Easter

Back to chimes we shall refound you!
Blevancourt! Carlepont!
Sens! Tonnerre! Clermont! Dijon!
Argonne!
Argonne!
Chateaudun, Domremy!
Lyon, Renes, Strasbourg et Paris!
Versailles!
Versailles!